Declassified and Approved For Release 2013/10/29 : CIA-RDP80M01009A000100050013-0

WASHINGTON DAILY NEWS JAN 29 1964

What's Going on Here?

By Henry J. Taylor

SECRETARY OF STATE DEAN RUSK, taken by surprise about events in Panama, told the House Foreign Affairs Committee on Jan. 16 that his department had consulted our returned ambassador, Joseph S. Farland. "Oh yes, Mr. Farland has been completely de-briefed," he testified.

On Ambassador Farland's statement to writer Victor Riesel, this is absolutely untrue. He was asked about nothing. He sat around Washington for three solid weeks without even—or ever—being consulted ("de-briefed"). Hey, Mr. Secretary!

It is vital now for President Johnson to find out who in the State Department arranged to misinform his Secretary of State.

Repeated failures to be informed, failures of subordinates to level with their boss, calculated sabotage of information such as the Farland brush-off, and repeated denials of the undeniable mistakes confront us again with the same mysteries we faced in the days of Yalta and of Alger Hiss.

Each crisis is a surprise—Soviet missiles in Cuba, Laos, the Berlin Wall, Nehru's invasion of Goa, the Dominican revolution, the Cambodian backlash, Zanzibar, Panama. Surprise, surprise, surprise. In the sacred name of the security of the United States, what's going on here?

Like Secretary Rusk, CIA director John A. McCone also failed inexplicably to consult Mr. Farland when the Ambassador returned from Panama, altho Mr. Farland's dispatches bristled with information about the Castro build-up and mounting crisis. An ex-FBI star, counter-espionage expert, the chief of mission and admittedly the most successful ambassador we've had in Latin America for many years, Mr. Farland was utterly ignored. Who in the CIA and State Department kept him away from the tops? And why was no new ambassador to Panama appointed for five critical months after Mr. Farland's return home last August?

Now, one of the things Mr. Farland knew, and that I knew, too, was that the CIA in both Cuba and Panama had been infiltrated wholesale by Soviet-trained Castro agents. This disclosure was proven by the systematic murders and tortures that greeted Cuban and Panamanian anti-communists promptly after being recruited by the CIA.

Details? I repeat here the text of my article of Feb. 27, 1963—11 long and decisive months ago—including the name of Castro's main agent in Panama, only to prove beyond any possible doubt that no surprise at the top of our Government is permissible.

"Castro's guerilla fleet is moving fighters and their arms into Panama. Costa Rican communist Julio Sanal is in Havana directing this with support in Costa Rica—on Panama's border. The chief debarkation point is La Colma (Cuba), now a Soviet-occupied port. Castro's receiving agent, protector and cover in Panama is famous Panamanian communist Thelma King—vicious, relentless, competent.

"By air these groups operate from the Soviet air base at San Julian, 90 miles southwest of Havana, and from San Antonio de los Banos. They are headquartered in downtown Candanga and the central radio tool is a very modern Russian-built station on Key Breton."

That was Feb. 27, 1963!

Starting with the Bay of Pigs, after new teams entered the boards of the State Department and CIA, the endless pattern of surprises and failures we have would be utterly impossible unless our Government has been infiltrated at the policy level.

The British, French, West German, Italian, Dutch and Swedish governments have experienced such Soviet infiltration. As our American Ambassador to Switzerland, I saw this happen even there. And we are seeing the success of deep-cover Sino-Soviet agents and fellow travelers planted here.

As it did to Chancellor Adenauer and Prime Minister Macmillan, it must come as a tragic, horrible shock to President Johnson. But all legislation and other important duties fail to nothing compared with the heart-breaking, shifty, diabolic problem he confronts: the restoration of internal top-level security. Moreover, he knows the enemy's self-serving alibi of "witch hunt" will automatically blare, as always and everywhere, the moment he moves.

May all intelligent citizens and thoughtful newspapers across our country help give him the strength to reach each discoverable truth, place security above every other consideration and let the chips fall where they may. This nation is in absolute peril—within Washington.

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